



STATE SENATOR
BRUCE PATTERSON
IN THE LOOP ★

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03/10/06

→ *PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO A FRIEND!*

Rockwood Senior Luncheon

Sen. Patterson will host a complimentary pasta luncheon for Seniors in Rockwood, on Monday, March 13, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm, at the Rockwood Community Center, 32001 Fort Street, Rockwood, between Huron River Drive and Gibraltar. Please call Amy, at (734) 379-5600, to *RSVP*.

Sen. Patterson will also speak on issues of concern to seniors.

'March is Reading Month'

Sen. Patterson visited Owen Elementary School in Trenton on Friday, March 3, and read to Mrs. Misko's 2nd Grade class from Anne Margaret Lewis' *Lighthouse Fireflies*. He will be visiting several other schools this month. At Owen School, he also spoke to the student body, answering questions during a special assembly. "Read to your kids."



Senate Committee offers own version of H.S. grad-requirements plan

After weeks of hearings around the state, including the one hosted by Senator Patterson in Brownstown, the Senate-backed bipartisan plan for statewide high-school graduation

requirements has won the backing of the Senate Education Committee and now goes to the full chamber. The plan would make Michigan a national leader in having rigorous high school graduation requirements.

Highlights of the Senate plan, which would go into effect for students entering ninth grade in 2007, include:

- Four credits of English
- Four math credits, including geometry, and Algebra I and II.
 - The Senate plan allows students to take Algebra II over two years.
- Three science credits.
- Three social science credits.
- Two foreign-language credits that can be completed *in any grade*.
- One health and physical-education credit.
- One visual, performing or applied arts credit.
- One course or online learning experience, or an online experience that is integrated into high-school curriculum.

Sen. Patterson is still actively consulting educators and others on the text as offered.

The Senate Education Committee held hearings across the state to seek input from parents, educators, and others. Existing law requires only a semester of civics (the content not otherwise defined) before graduation, and leaves other standards to local boards.

Money for Seniors to buy food in Wayne County

Do you, or some senior you know, have to think, ‘What can I buy this month, and what must I go without?’ It can be a tough choice. But there is a Food Assistance Program in Wayne County to help.

If you live in Wayne County and have a low income; if you, or someone in your home, is 60 or older, MiCAFE may help you. Michigan’s Coordinated Access to Food for the Elderly is set up to help get seniors food. You can get a “Bridge Card”, used like a credit card at most grocery stores, to buy fruit, meat, vegetables, milk, bread, and the like. You may call the Senior Service Center at (313) 833-1300 for further information.

Detroit water department reform bills approved

Senate Bill 372 is on its way to the governor’s desk, marking the second attempt to bring accountability to the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department for suburban constituents.

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Dept. has been plagued for more than three decades by problems involving substantial wholesale rate increases, delinquent accounts, water main breaks, security lapses, contracting irregularities and other questionable practices.

Since 1996, wholesale water rates charged by DWSD to its suburban customers have increased by more than 93 percent. This is more than three-and-a-half times the rate of inflation in the same period.

Healthy-living incentive legislation introduced

Legislation that will help employers keep healthcare costs down is on its way to the Senate floor. Senate Bills 848 and 849, approved recently by the Senate Health Policy

Committee, where Sen. Patterson is Vice-Chairman, allow an insurer to offer *wellness coverage*. This coverage may provide for a premium rebate, or a reduction in co-payments, co-insurance, or deductibles.

Wellness coverage plans were created to be an incentive to get the insured population healthy and keep them that way, while at the same time creating a cost-saving mechanism for insurers and employers.

About 25 percent to 30 percent of health-care costs can be attributed to unhealthy behaviors.

Did you know? - You have a right to ‘shop’ for prescriptions

Michigan law states:

333.17757 Price information; notice; receipt evidencing transactions; omission; retention of copy of receipt; rules.

Sec. 17757.

(1) Upon a request made in person or by telephone, a pharmacist engaged in the business of selling drugs at retail shall provide the current selling price of a drug dispensed by that pharmacy or comparative current selling prices of generic and brand name drugs dispensed by that pharmacy. The information shall be provided to the person making the request before a drug is dispensed to the person. A person who makes a request for price information under this subsection shall not be obligated to purchase the drug for which the price or comparative prices are requested.

Under Michigan law, you have the right to find out the price of a prescription drug before the pharmacist fills the prescription. You are under no obligation to have the prescription filled here and may use this price information to shop around at other pharmacies. You may request price information in person or by telephone.

Every pharmacy has the current selling prices of both generic and brand name drugs dispensed by the pharmacy.

Ask your pharmacist if a lower-cost generic drug is available to fill your prescription. A generic drug contains the same medicine as a brand name drug and is a suitable substitute in most instances.

A generic drug may not be dispensed by your pharmacist if your doctor has written “dispense as written” or the initials “*d.a.w.*” on the prescription.

If you have questions about the drugs which have been prescribed for you, ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information.

To avoid *dangerous drug interactions*, let your doctor and pharmacist know about any other medications you are taking. This is especially important if you have more than one doctor or have prescriptions filled at more than one pharmacy.

Senators hear details on bills to protect children from sexual predators

Testimony was heard recently in the Senate Judiciary Committee, where Sen. Patterson is senior attorney, on legislation designed to give judges and law enforcement officials a powerful new weapon to protect children from sexual predators. The legislation will give

prosecutors the ability to charge and judges the option of sentencing individuals convicted of sex with children to life in prison with no chance of parole.

If signed into law, Senate Bill 709, along with two companion bills, will make it possible for an individual convicted of criminal sexual conduct in the first degree to serve a life sentence without a chance of parole if the victim was under the age of 13. The proposal also requires one of the following circumstances be present: infliction of injury, use of a weapon, force or coercion, or the perpetrator held a position of authority.

Bill introduced to increase penalties for certain right-of-way violators

Legislation introduced recently in the Michigan Senate could increase the punishment for motorists who do not abide by Michigan right-of-way laws. SB 1126 would increase punishment to include a fine and license suspension to those who injure or kill others while violating right-of-way laws, in addition to any criminal charges and fines already in place. In the past, when a motorist injured someone because of a right-of-way violation, there were no penalties to prohibit the driver from returning to the road. Under this legislation a minimum 30-day suspension will be imposed, with the possibility of fines.

Deployed National Guard & Reservists could see temporary modification in child-support payments

National Guard and reserve members called to military duty could see a temporary modification in child-support payments with legislation introduced recently in the Michigan Senate.

Senate Bill 1128 would qualify military deployment as a “change in circumstance” and allow a National Guard or reserve member to pay an adjusted amount in child-support payments if the military member experiences a decrease in compensation.

At present, child-support payments may only be modified due to a “change in circumstance,” and military deployment does not qualify as a change in circumstance. In order for the military member to receive a temporary child-support payment adjustment he or she must provide proof of deployment date and compensation rate. Within 30 days of discharge from active duty, the military member would be required to notify the Friend of the Court to reinstate the previous amount paid in child support.

Comcast Newsmakers: Patterson interviewed on Long-Range Energy

Sen. Patterson’s interview will be shown on CNN Headline News in the Lansing and Jackson viewing areas during the week of March 13-March 19, three times a day at 54 minutes after the hour.

The Southfield Comcast production team ‘tentatively’ plans to air in Wayne County in the week of April 24 - 28.

In the meantime, go to Sen. Patterson’s webpage, < www.senate.michigan.gov/patterson >, scroll to the lower right corner, and find the video link there on-line. It runs five minutes.

Office Hours schedule for March, 2006

On **Tuesdays** of each week, Sue Trussell, Sen. Patterson's District Representative, will hold office hours from 11:00am to 1:00pm at the following places:

March 14th Woodhaven City Hall, 21869 West Road, Woodhaven
March 21st Huron Township Hall, 37290 Huron River Drive, New Boston
March 28th Flat Rock Library
(includes Rockwood constituents)

Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future updates via e-mail, please contact my office at < senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov >.

You can also visit me in my Lansing office at 505 Farnum Building, just across S. Capitol Avenue from the state Capitol; or you can send me mail at P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909. Telephone (517) 373-7350 or (866) 262-7307; fax (517) 373-9228. I want to hear from you.

See the *Legislative Questionnaire* on the Website, too! Your responses are welcomed!